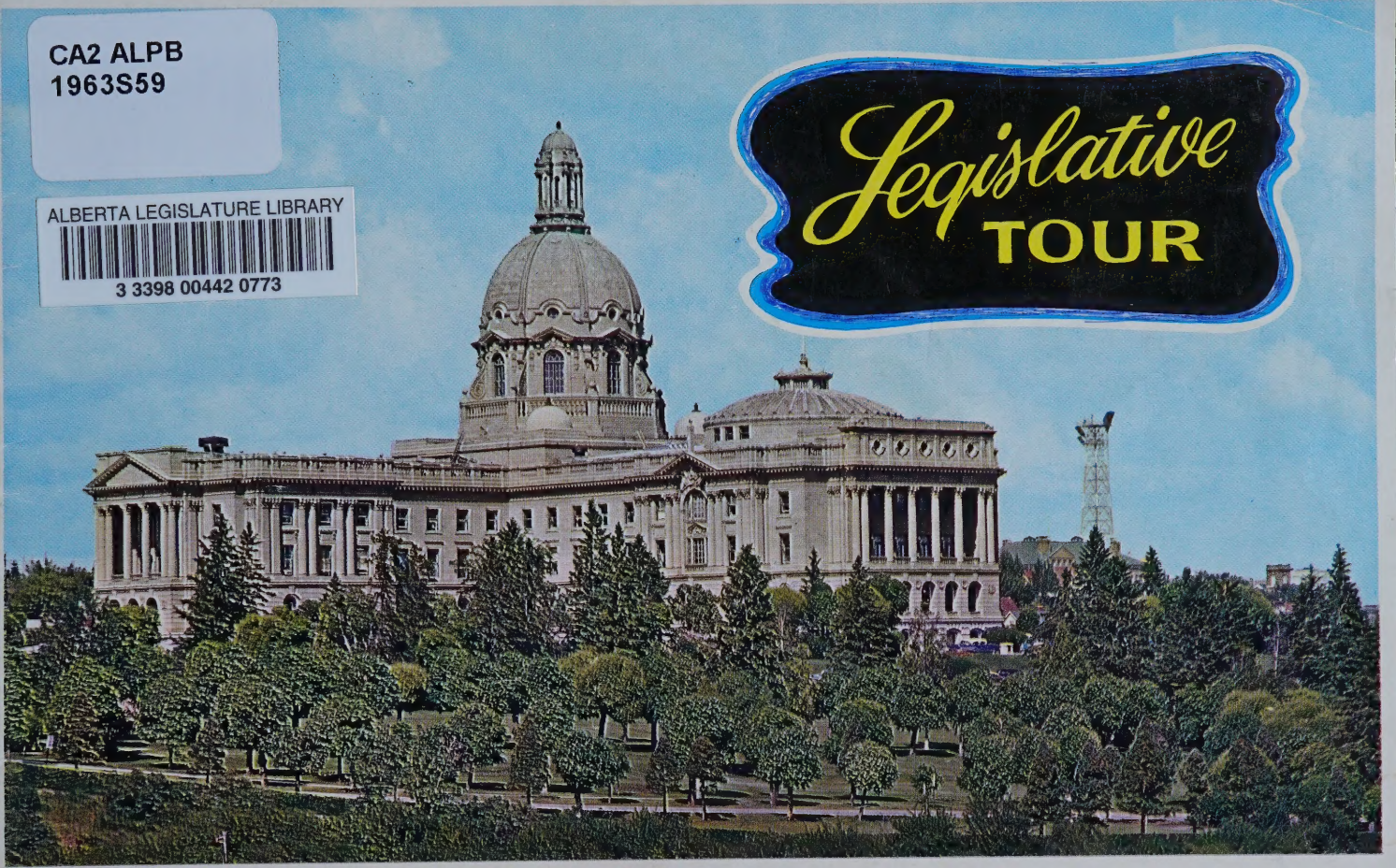
CA2 ALPB
1963S59

ALBERTA LEGISLATURE LIBRARY
3 3398 00442 0773

Legislative TOUR



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2025 with funding from
Legislative Assembly of Alberta - Alberta Legislature Library

Souvenir of Your Visit

TO THE

ALBERTA PROVINCIAL

Legislative Buildings

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

PUBLISHED BY THE ALBERTA GOVERNMENT PUBLICITY BUREAU

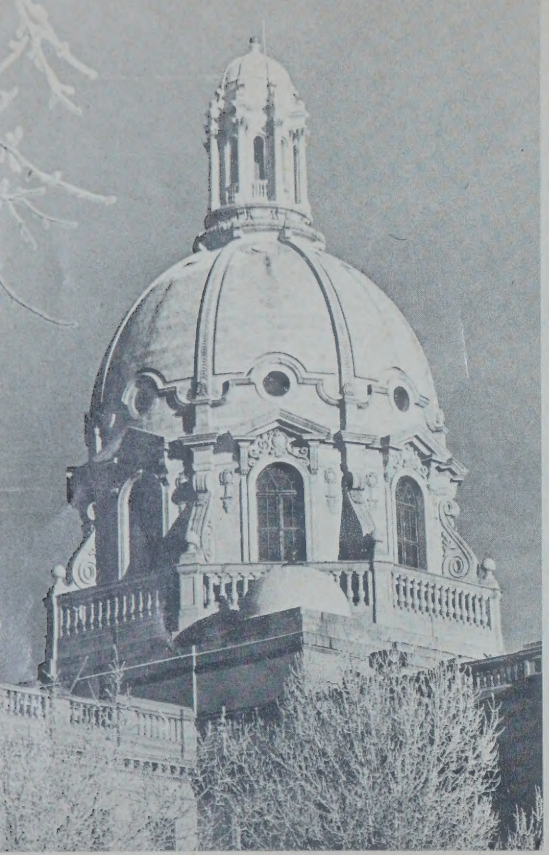
H. E. MARTIN, DIRECTOR OF PUBLICITY AND ADVERTISING

Hon. A. Russell Patrick

MINISTER OF INDUSTRY
AND DEVELOPMENT

J. E. Oberholtzer

DEPUTY MINISTER



The Dome

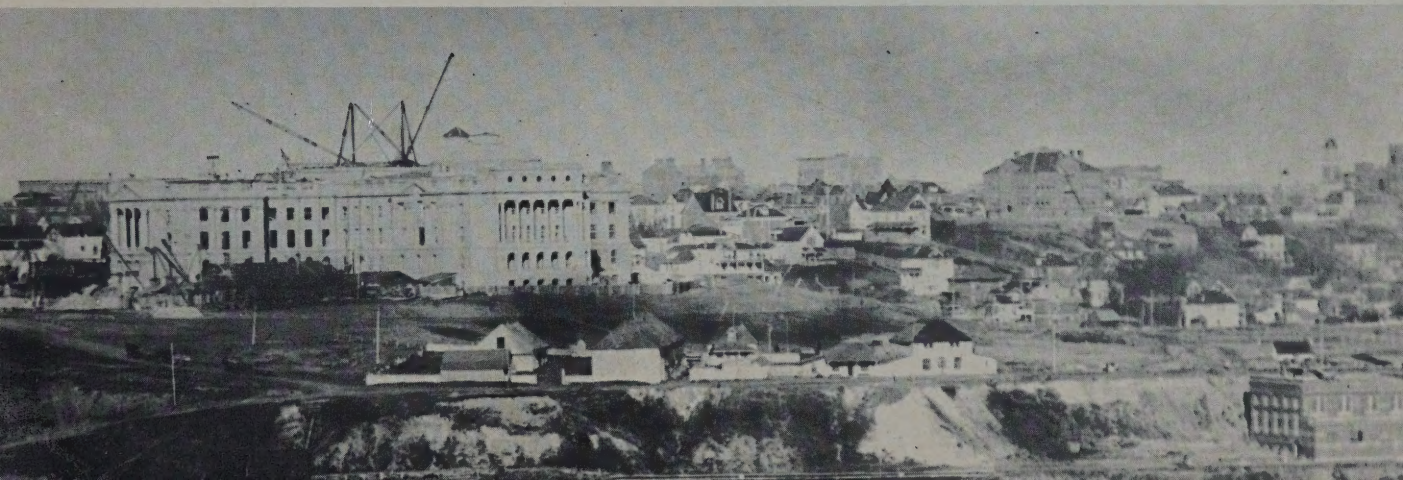
"WHILE it is with a degree of pride and pleasure that we note the changed conditions from the fur traders' life to a prosperous, modern civilization, we must admit the feeling that we are, after all, aiming only to establish for our people the most important and imposing structure in the province upon a site in our judgment well suited for the purpose, and in doing so following in the footsteps of the officers of the historic trading company who established themselves upon the same ground some two generations before."

The foregoing extract from the special Christmas edition of the Edmonton Bulletin, 1906, truly typifies the convictions of those men who established a provincial capital in the new North West. As legislators, their faith in the destiny of the country must have been profound, for they envisioned a capital of supreme dignity and beauty which would forever be a credit to a city of rapid progress and to a Province whose star should forever be in the ascendant.

History of the Building . . .

Alberta's first government, led by Hon. A. C. Rutherford, held its opening ceremonies in the Thistle Rink on March 15, 1906. It was natural that one of the primary subjects for discussion and decision should be that of providing a structure to house the offices of the newly-formed government.

There was some degree of controversy as to the selection of the city to be so graced; certain members favoring Edmonton and others advancing vigorous arguments on Calgary's behalf. There were those, too, who suggested Red Deer and Banff, but Edmonton was the eventual favorite, by a vote of 16 to 8.



Under Construction

There was no doubt, however, as to the actual site of the proposed building and the location embraced both historical significance and physical prominence. On the north bank of the North Saskatchewan River was the old Hudson's Bay Company's fort. The actual site of the Legislative Building was to be where the fort's "Big House" (official residence of the Chief Factor) once stood. The palisades and bastions of the fort were removed in 1915 to make room for a bowling green.

In 1905 a temporary building had been decided on to be used only until the permanent Legislative Building was completed. This building was known as the Terrace Building and stood south and east of the main building. The Terrace Building, intended for later use as apartment building when its use for office space was unnecessary, never was so used. It was torn down and replaced by the present multi-level new Terrace Building to house the growing number of Government offices.

Alberta's Legislative Building was designed by A. M. Jeffers, architect and chief of the engineering branch of the Department of Public Works, and at a later date the work was taken over by R. P. Blakey, F.R.I.B.A. Construction was supervised by Hon. W. H. Cushing, Minister of Public Works; John Stocks, Deputy Minister of Public Works; John Chalmers, Constructional Engineer; John Gillespie, Superintendent of Buildings; and the two architects. Although contracts were let for wiring, heating, plumbing and ventilation, the actual work on the building was done largely by day labor.

Governor General Earl Grey at Cornerstone Ceremony, 1909

Excavation work began in August, 1907, under the supervision of Tom Dalling. Concrete footings were put in for the basement in the spring of 1908 but quicksand was encountered and it became necessary to sink concrete pilings reinforced with steel channel beams, before the footings were laid. This delay consumed much of the building season of 1908 but a start was made on the steelwork that same year and the major part of the skeleton had been fabricated by 1909. The steel was supplied by the Structural Steel Company of Montreal and the Canadian Bridge Company of Walkerville, Ontario. Steel fabrication was directed and supervised by A. T. Fraser.

The first granite to be used in construction was for the base, or first storey, including the steps at the main, east and west entrances. The granite was quarried on Vancouver Island and construction was by Kelly and Murray of Vancouver.

The cornerstone was laid on October 1 of that year. Approximately four feet by five feet, it is located at the northeast corner of the building and the brass plaque bears this inscription: "This cornerstone was laid by His Excellency the Right Honourable Albert Henry George, Earl Grey, G.C.B., G.C.M.G., G.C.V.O., Governor General of Canada, October 1, 1909". Under the stone were laid copies of each of the three Edmonton newspapers, a complete set of plans of the building, coins and currency, a copy of the pay sheet and a list of the officials who had supervised the construction work.

View from the East

It had been decided that the main portion of the Legislative Building, above the British Columbia granite, should be constructed of Alberta sandstone. With this in mind, the government purchased the Glenbow quarry, near Calgary. The contract for getting out the stone was awarded to John Quinlan of Montreal and W. Carter of Edmonton. A company was formed, incorporated under the name of Quinlan, Carter and Company, and the cutting and fitting were carried out in Edmonton under direction of A. Walters of Toronto. Much of the carving was done by Mr. Clutterbuck of London, England. Erection of the stone work was supervised by Gilbert Land, Assistant Superintendent of Buildings.

Construction continued throughout the years 1910, 1911 and much of 1912. The wiring contract was awarded to the Cunningham Electric Company of Calgary and the electric lighting fixtures were supplied by J. A. Baunf Manufacturing Company of Chicago. Plumbing, heating and ventilation were completed by A. Lee Company of Edmonton.

On November 30, 1911, although construction was far from completed, a session of the Legislature was opened for the first time in the new building.

The official opening took place on September 3, 1912, although the building was still far from complete. Just 10 days before the ceremonies the rotunda was filled with scaffolding; and masons, sculptors, electricians and carpenters were rushing to complete their work where it would count most. However, upon the arrival of the Royal Party, the main entrance, the rotunda, the Legislative Chamber, the dining room and most of the east wing were ready.

The Speaker's Suite

The Duke of Connaught, then Governor General of Canada, officially opened the building and was later presented with a replica of the key which he had used to unlock the main doors. It was made of Saskatchewan River gold and was surmounted by the Provincial Arms wrought in the metal. In his address His Royal Highness complimented the government not only upon the location of the Legislative Building, but upon the general structure itself. "You, gentlemen," he concluded, "have shown your sentiment of the dignity of the duties which have to be performed here!"

South Entrance

And Today . . .

It isn't strange that visitors to Alberta's capital city should show such keen interest in the Legislative Building. External beauty and magnificent proportioning have combined to present an architectural masterpiece. The grounds slope in terraces down to the north bank of the North Saskatchewan and are pleasingly landscaped with kaleidoscopic flower beds, sweeping lawns and various trees. The building directly to the south is the power plant and is connected with the main building by an underground tunnel. Between is the Royal Bowling Club.

The main building itself is in the form of a huge cross, with the central axis extending north and south, flanked by east and west wings. The dome surmounts the intersection of the two axes and encloses a circular gallery slightly above the main roof level, with eight high-arched windows in what is referred to as the "drum" of the dome. The circular, curved surface of the dome is sheathed with terracotta tiles, bedded and pointed with a mixture of cement and linseed oil to compensate

for expansion and contraction from temperature changes. The "lantern" or lookout tower surmounting the dome may appear quite small from the ground, but its platform is as large as a small room and affords an excellent view of the city and surrounding countryside, from the plumes of oil flares in the Leduc field to the south, to the packing plants and coal mines beyond the northeast corner of the city. The dome is borne on a structural-steel framework and the main members of the frame are carried on steel columns extending through the masonry of the rotunda down to the footings at least 24 feet below grade level.

At the main entrance is a pavilion of six immense Corinthian columns, surmounted by entablature and pediment, the latter being decorated by a massive stone carving of the Alberta Arms. The east, west and south wings are terminated in Corinthian pavilions, the southern one being surmounted by a cornice rather than entablature and pediment. On all wings the first storey is heavily channelled granite, the second channelled ashlar stonework with arched window openings, while the remaining three storeys are of sandstone in a more severe motif.

Interior Beauty . . .

No expense was spared to make the structure one of permanent beauty. Offices of cabinet ministers, the council chamber, the galleries of the Legislative Chamber, the Speaker's living quarters, and various other office and committee rooms are finished in mahogany. Hand-carved oak doors

Hand-Carved Oak Door

displaying the Arms of the Province adorn the main entrance. The main rotunda, open from the well on the first floor to the vaulted dome 176 feet above, is brilliantly lighted and trimmed with marble.

Three types of marble were used in this section of the building, the green marble on the base of the chamber was obtained from Pennsylvania while grey marble from Quebec was used in the pillars in the rotunda, the main section of the staircase and the base of the halls and rotunda. The third type of marble was imported from Italy for the railings of the grand staircase and third floor. Italian artisans were brought over solely for the purpose of laying the terrazzo floors.

Upon entering, one sees the main rotunda and staircase directly to the south. In the center of the rotunda is a well, centered by flowing fountains and flower boxes, providing a continuous opening from the main floor to the roof of the dome. Proceeding up the main staircase we come to the entrance of the Legislative Assembly. This chamber is richly carpeted and is lighted by more than 500 lights mounted in the lofted ceiling. Portraits of Queen Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh are displayed to the right of the Speaker's chair, similar portraits of the late King George VI and Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother, to the left. On the floor of the chamber is the historical high-backed

The Rotunda

chair which once belonged to the Speaker of the first Assembly of the North West Territories, held in Regina in 1888.

From the marble balustrade around the gallery of the third floor are mounted the battle flags of the battalions sent from Edmonton and district in the First Great War. In the corridors on the third and fourth floors are portraits of premiers and ministers of former Alberta administrations.

Facing north on the fourth floor is the Speaker's suite. These quarters, at the disposal of this official and his family during the sessions, consist of three rooms and bath, fully furnished. The Speaker's residence on the premises is a cherished institution, derived from the early history of the British House of Commons, where participation in sessions occupied the greater part of the day and the Speaker's presence was imperative.

The dining room, mentioned earlier, was located on the fifth floor, a relic of other days when pomp and ceremony were so vital.

Stairs to Legislative Chamber

The Legislative Chamber

The Lieutenant Governor reads the Speech from the Throne at the opening of the Legislature, with the Honourable the Speaker at his right.

Legislative Chamber . . .

The members of the Legislative Assembly sit in the Legislative Chamber. The raised platform at one end of the Chamber is occupied by the Speaker, who enforces the rules of parliamentary procedure. All discussions are addressed to the Speaker.

In front of the Speaker in the centre of the Chamber is a long table. On this table is the mace, which is the symbol of the Speaker when he enters the Chamber. When he leaves, the mace leaves also.

Chairs and desks line the two sides of the Chamber. Those on the Speaker's right are occupied by the Government, with the members of the Cabinet occupying the front row. Those on the left of the Speaker are occupied by members of other parties, and are called the Opposition.

Around four sides of the Chamber are galleries. The galleries at either side are public galleries and are open to the public at large. Over the Speaker is the Press Gallery, occupied by members of press and radio. Opposite the Speaker is the Speaker's Gallery, where guests of the Speaker may sit by invitation.

At the opening of the Legislature, generally each February, the Lieutenant Governor arrives in state dress, with due ceremony by military units and the public. In the Legislative Chamber the Lieutenant Governor reads the Speech from the Throne, which has been prepared for him by the Executive Council. This speech summarizes the business which the Government intends to lay before the House during the session. Having delivered his speech, the Lieutenant Governor leaves the Chamber, leaving the Assembly to conduct the work at hand.

The main business of each session of the Legislature centres around:

1. The debate on the Speech from the Throne;

2. The budget speech, delivered by the Provincial Treasurer, which involves discussion of estimates for public works and the services which the Government intends to carry out during the year;

3. The reports from each of the 15 departments into which the Government is divided, given by the responsible ministers during either the debate on the Speech from the Throne or, the budget speech;

4. The introduction of bills which must pass through three readings before they are accepted and become law. This work is usually done by Committee of the whole House. For this committee work, the Speaker leaves the chair and rules of parliamentary procedure are set aside, and the bills are discussed clause by clause.

An unique traditional ceremony marks the end of the session when the Fourth Estate, in the Press Gallery, "throw back the words of the legislators" they have recorded during the session by dumping torn sheets of copy paper on the Legislators below.

Provincial Library . . .

No tour of Alberta's Legislative Building is complete without a visit to the Provincial Library, located directly below the Legislative Chamber, on the second floor. Well-stocked with more than 60,000 volumes, the library contains all types of reading and is particularly renowned for its comprehensive set of books of reference and governmental records from all parts of Canada and the United States. Books of law and copies of Hansard from Confederation to the present day, as well as leading periodicals and magazines of the day are available in the library.

Here, too, a visitor may sit on the historic bench used by the Lieutenant-Governors of the North West Territories from 1876 to 1905; inspect the cannon used in the defence of Fort Edmonton; and view the silver service presented to Maj. Gen. T. Bland Strange for his part in suppressing the Riel Rebellion in 1885.

The Provincial Library

The Administration Building

Other Government Offices . . .

Those sturdy pioneers of Alberta's governmental forms should surely be praised for their foresight and faith in the Province's future. But the progress and growth of the country was even more rapid than they would have predicted. As administrative services expanded, it soon became apparent that more space than that provided in the main building would be required. Today, offices of the Provincial Government are to be found in many parts of the

New Terrace Building From Front

city, and there are local offices in other parts of the Province. Those in Edmonton include the Administration Building and the Natural Resources Building on 109 Street; the Alberta Government Telephones Building and the Alberta Highways Building on 107 Street; Public Works Building on 121 Street and 104 Avenue; Terrace Building south of the Legislative Building; Alberta Block, 10526 Jasper Avenue, and Alberta Jasper Building, 98 Street and Jasper Avenue.

The Natural Resources Building

The Natural Resources Building

The Natural Resources Building was constructed in 1931 and is 275 feet long and 102 feet wide. It is "U" shaped, five storeys high and was designed by F. H. MacDonald of the Provincial Architect's office and Professor C. S. Burgess of the University of Alberta. Tyndall stone, a handsome, durable limestone, was supplied by the Western Stone Company of Winnipeg. The building is of steel construction with reinforced concrete floors. Of interest in this building is the stained glass window on the staircase landing between the second and third floors which features the Provincial Arms. The border is executed in a wild rose (floral emblem of the Province) motif.

Jubilee Memorial . . .

Erected in 1955, the year of Alberta's Golden Jubilee, in commemoration of the inauguration of the Province of Alberta, September 1, 1905, this memorial stands on the Legislative Grounds to the north of the main entrance to the Legislative Building. The monument was unveiled and dedicated during the province's official Golden Jubilee Celebration ceremonies on September 7, 1955, by the Right Honourable Louis St. Laurent, Prime Minister of Canada.

Arms OF THE PROVINCE OF ALBERTA

THE PROVINCIAL CREST

By Royal Warrant, dated 30th May, 1907, Armorial Ensigns were assigned to the Province of Alberta as follows: "Azure in front of a Range of Snow Mountains proper a Range of Hills Vert, in base a Wheat Field surmounted by a Prairie both also proper, on a Chief Argent a St. George's Cross," to be borne for the said Province on Seals, Shields, Banners, Flags, or otherwise according to the Laws of Arms.

THE PROVINCIAL MACE

The Provincial Mace is the traditional symbol of authority of the Legislative Assembly and is carried by the Sergeant-at-Arms into the Assembly at the opening of each daily sitting.

The history of the mace dates back to mediaeval times when a mace was used as a weapon. Early ceremonial maces were borne by members of the royal bodyguard during the reign of Richard I. Parliamentary maces came into general use during the 13th century and it was during that period they were deemed worthy of being enriched with costly metal and jewels.

The design of the Alberta Mace is connected with the history and culture of the Province. At the top is a hand-carved figure of a beaver mounted on the traditional Crown representing the connection of the Province with the Crown and the Commonwealth. Engraved on the Crown are wild roses, the floral emblem of Alberta and sheaves of wheat. Around the head band of the Crown are gems and semi-precious stones. The first letter of each of these gems— Amethyst, Lapis Lazuli, Beryl, Emerald, Ruby, Topaz, Aquamarine— combining to spell the word "Alberta".

Below the Crown is a bowl with the coat-of-arms of Alberta in colored enamel. The shield is surrounded by more hand-carved wild roses and wheat sheaves. At the top of the bowl are the royal coat-of-arms and the Canadian coat-of-arms and where the shaft begins are two hand-carved buffalo heads.

THE ALBERTA TARTAN

Designed by the Edmonton Rehabilitation Society for the Handicapped the Alberta Tartan was given official recognition by Act of the Legislature assented to March 30th, 1961. The design is of two main blocks. One, of solid green, represents the forest wealth of Alberta. It is bordered by lines of black, symbolic of the province's mineral resources of coal and petroleum.

The second block is emblematic of other attributes of the province, with a strip of rose, for the Wild Rose, Alberta's official flower; a strip of blue for the province's clear skies and sparkling lakes; and a strip of gold, for the treasure of the wheat fields.

Each .of these strips, as well as the last two strips repeating the pink and blue colors, is separated by bands of black.

FLORAL EMBLEM OF ALBERTA

The floral emblem of the Province of Alberta is the Rose Acicularis, popularly known as the "wild rose". This flower is a common sight in Alberta, brightening fields and roadsides with its beautiful red petals.

The wild rose was chosen in The Floral Emblem Act of 1930.